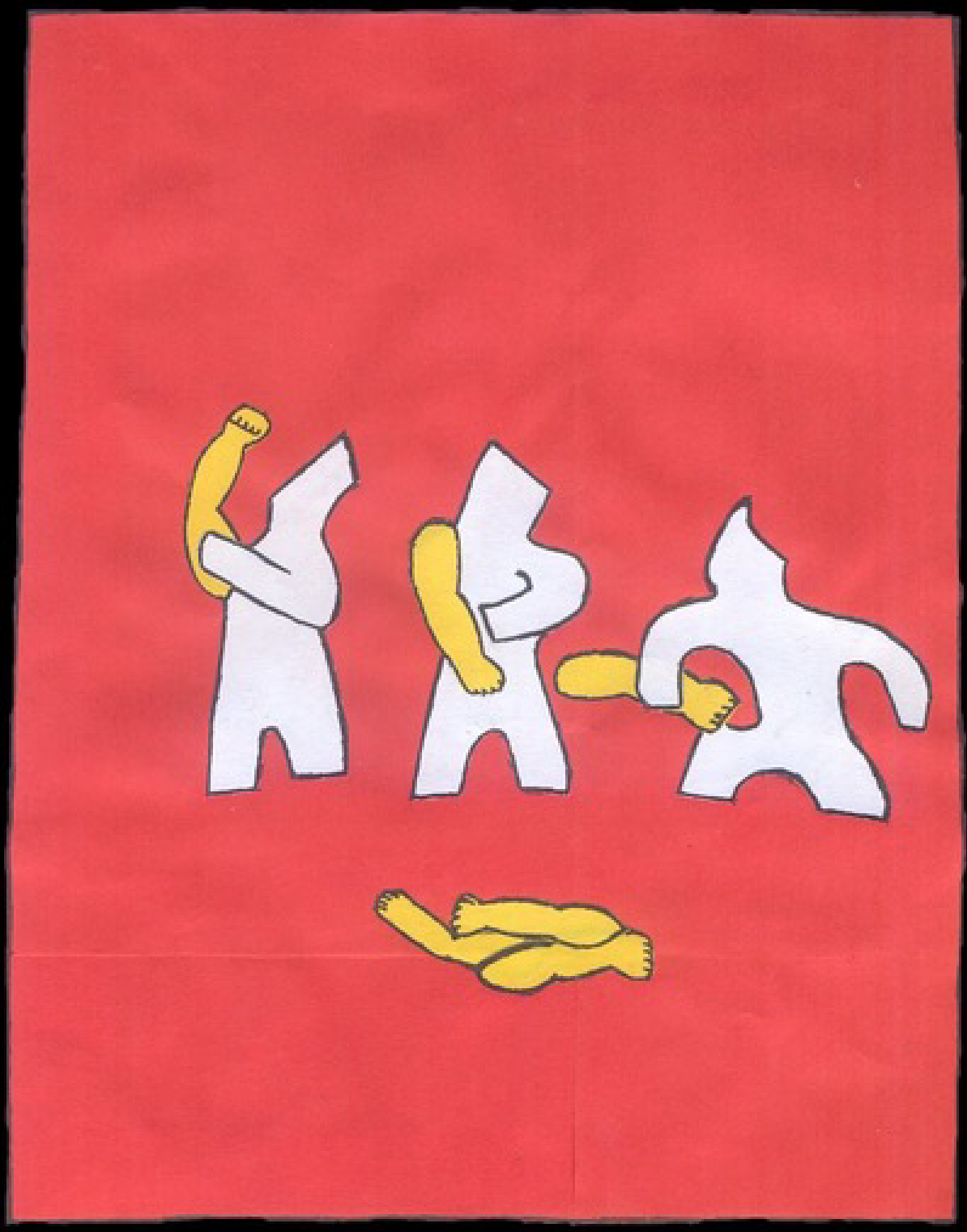

Rhizome Magazine

RHIZOME MAGAZINE

summer/autumn 2025

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Summer/Autumn 2025

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Rhizome DC is a nonprofit community arts space located at 6950 Maple St NW, in the Takoma neighborhood of Washington DC. We are dedicated to promoting creativity as a force for personal empowerment and community engagement. We also strive to provide a home for non-mainstream programming in the DC area.

We host programs that promote creativity in all its forms. These include concerts, workshops, performances, talks, exhibitions, and demonstration projects in areas such as art, music, technology, theater, local food, poetry, as well as in more esoteric fields of knowledge. We believe it's more interesting to make your own culture than to consume culture made by others. We are exploring new approaches to grassroots community education which seek to blur the lines between amateur and professional, teacher and student, and which free learning from rigid models of instruction and explication. We also strongly support non-commercial artistic experiences and seek to provide a space for artists to create experimental works and share the results with the broader community.

To get involved, lead a program, or perform at Rhizome, or for any other questions or for information, please contact us at info@rhizomedc.org

Let us summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome: unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature.

— Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

COVER ART FRONT: *Arm Yourself*, M. Tappert
BACK: *Dog Eat Dog*, M. Tappert

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MATTHEW GORDON

Excerpts from What

hundreds of visitors gather
in front of false politics-
the unstrategic gathering filled
the cultural debase of our times

eavesdropping on me might,
in the past, tower
over nude technology,
but now we begin to compare no's,
collective goals, and goddesses
as I am sullenly propelled to the center

we have reached the deaf end of
consensual power games
and like the dying designing their own journey,
my little heart is broken.

the dead woman is resting
taking your place – so thank you
for dauntless separation.

house her name inside of death-
I called to god
one returns- the woman retreated
a visitor of last resort-

light comes this way
posed in its passing, like a parade
twists her straight face

she knows its passage

flexing ass doxers
part almost men, part cultural instigators,
sat where sci-fi guessed,
posing as echo tourists-

watch their hands
lock- pigeonhole
the zeitgeist of our ties
to the middle- ease
a huge mecha glove
to strike the new fate.

radical futurists
posing as leaving saints
dressed in sham haute,
devoured all margin backing money
in the past land idea terrain

the performance predicts
how the blackslash era begins

ALEX M

edtwt Deathsquad

— alice, awful.
please nominate a better life!
shit or get off pot!
some movement
in carnations
big old twelve gauge adjust my
expectations

again, agog, ajar
super stuck in lupron world
just one more gin begin
so the body is a rental car
sweet talk teleology we're in
— alice, promise
it's the tin that makes the sardines swim

silly and seran-wrapped
and concussive and percussive
mother mixer cola w tha robitussin
ooooh i miss my sister
vodka w tha spritzer
if u like it that way
she's so au fait
— alice, okay,
I wouldn't,
I couldn't say

uhhhhh…….
— alice, ummmm…..
god, girl; god, girl;
ur so fucking dumb

sorry, sorry!
my friend is drunk….
she mean no offence…….
— alice,
alice, excellence.

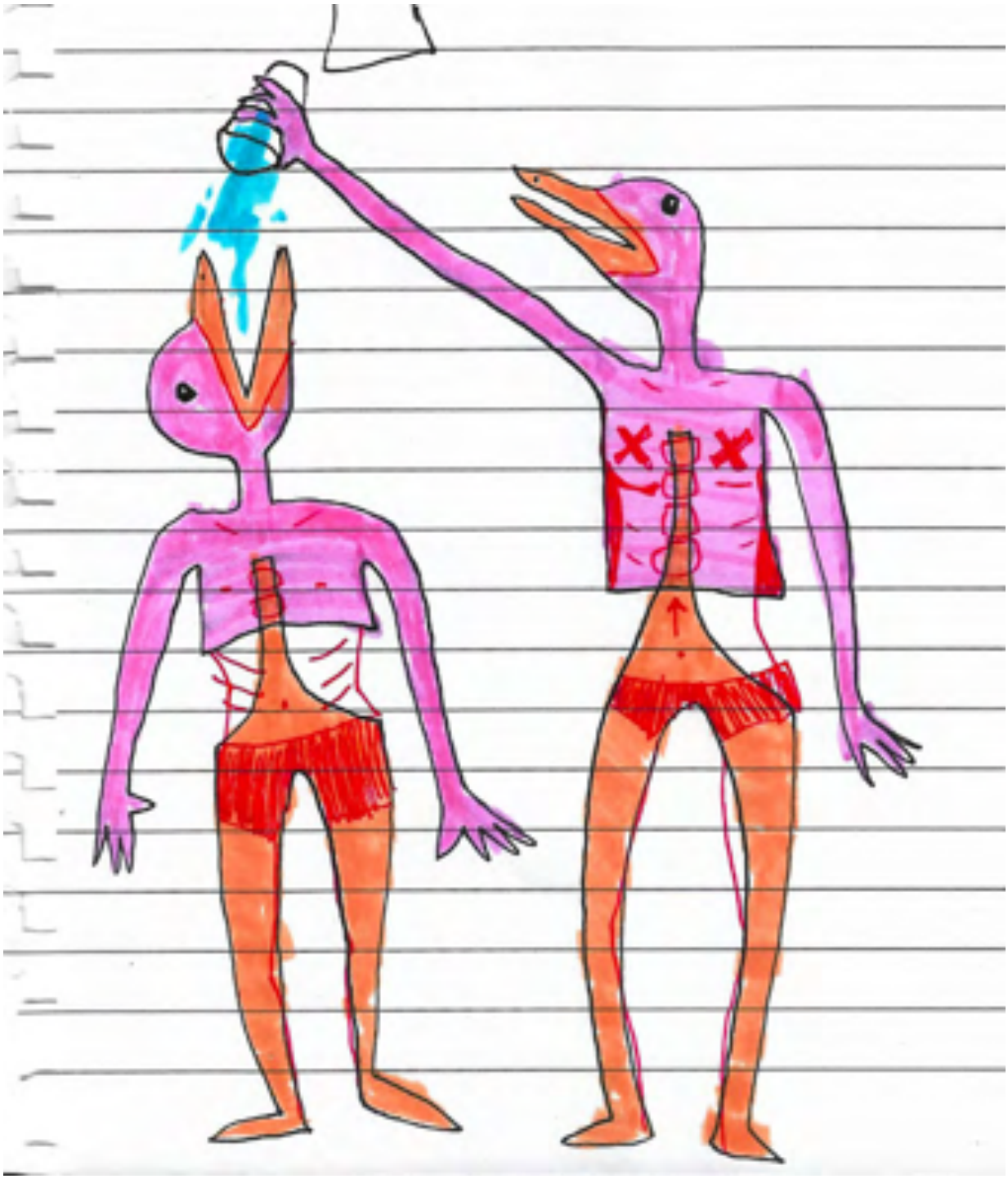
KALEA MATSAKIS

Clarity is Kind

Don't bake him a cake, Kalea.
Do not bake that boy a cake to let him know you love his absence.

That is confusing

CADDAIN MOE



SAHELI KHASTAGIR

I wished to be a kite

I wished
to be the kind of person
that walks from her apartment to the coffee shop
on a weekday to sip coffee and unwind and then walk back
and get right on with my day. I wanted to do it casually, like walking
to the mailroom. But the moment I wished for it, I removed any possibility
of ever being that person, because the one who walks to the coffee shop on a weekday
to casually unwind in the middle of a busy morning does not wish for it. She just does it. I suppose what I wished for was not the coffee or even the walk, I wished for her ease, the ease with which she does not wish for things, but just does it. Anything I do these days is wished and scheduled for in advance. Pre-planned, pre-empted, pre-determined. I know that I'll sit on the balcony for exactly 40 minutes to read the Guardian with my tea, I know that I'll have oats for breakfast, I know that I will then work for 5 hours, I know what emails I'll send, and I know which ones I expect to receive, I know when I will take my lunch and my shower, I know if & when I will have sex today. I also know what *kind* of sex I will have. The kinky kind
is not scheduled until next Tuesday. I have planned my meals for the next 10 days
and brought groceries to make those meals. Which means, I will resist any
sudden plans for dinner outside, because what will happen to the
pre-brought groceries for the pre-planned meals? I know that
my next human interaction will be at 6.30 pm tonight
and it will be with my mother. I guess what I am
saying is that every time the world pulled
the ground from under my feet, I
walked inside a geometry box
and made circles with a
compass, & each time
the circle closed
I wished
and
wished
to be the maker
of a circle that wasn't
so perfectly, irrefutably circular.
I suppose what I wished for then
was to be a kite and my spool
to be

thrown

into

the

wind.

GERALD MAJER

from Kalimba with Dennis

Dennis Boyd strikes once, twice, forever, and the stainless steel disc minutely shivers and rings bright as he keeps moving around the circle, visiting in front of each drummer for a beat, beats, a bar.

Mobile and motile. He doesn't own a phone, he doesn't own a drum, but people can find him if they know his tracks and footsteps, and most of the drummers agree he's the best player among all of them.

A lush Baltimore Sunday in late May, and at five in the afternoon fifteen drummers are rolling and more are coming up the hill. Next door in the pavilion, a picnic is going strong and their music floats in with the drums or the drums float together with their music. The grass is thick with tiny yellow buttercups and the facade of the Mansion House across the road looks miles away.

We're standing around the picnic bench absorbing: the park air, the drinks solo or shared, the scent of the giant frankincense sticks posted around the base of the tree, the sap-smoke weed in glass-swirl pipes, in pipes with top flaps, in skinny joints like burning digits.

Dennis relays a certain holy smoke. His face: something shrining, something opening the doors of shrines.

He looks out over the lawns and drums and trees, the playground on the next rise, the open-air pavilion next door.

It might be he is filled with green and with today's blue sky and its coursing birds traveling the breadth and length of the park.

"Right now," Dennis says, looking back at all of us, "This is the most beautiful place on earth."

Everybody hears, looks, says, "I hear you." Or doesn't need to say a word.

"Not to say, " he adds," that there aren't other places in the world that are beautiful also."

Mobile and motile, Dennis slips out of categories, at once announcing the Park Vibe alive and well and sounding its death knell.

That tree is dying, he tells me. *I hope it doesn't fall on us.*

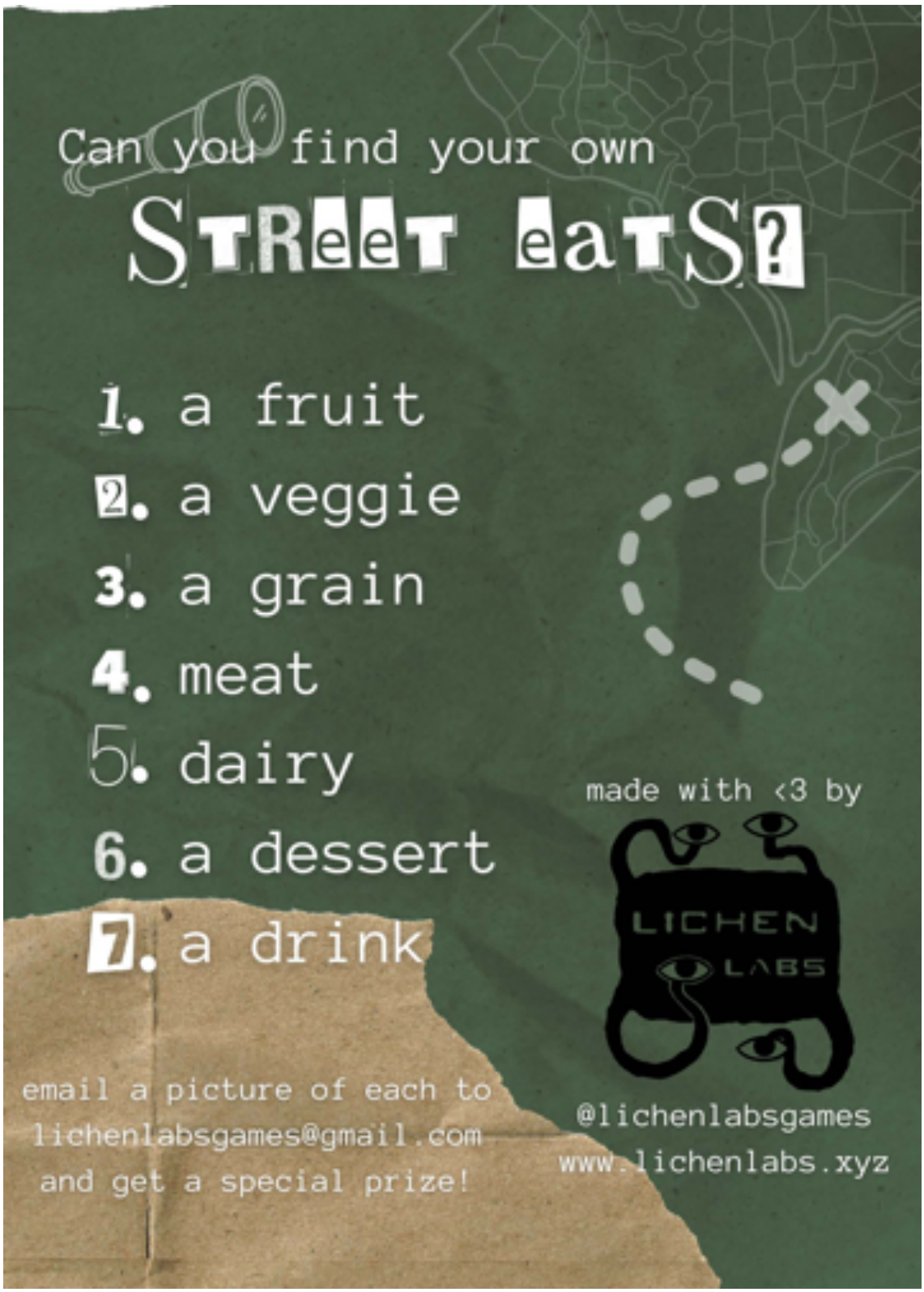
I'm not worried, Dennis says one time when Aesh and Troy and other drummers are sitting at the picnic bench after an hour of playing and talking. Aesh calls the drum circle a place for sociable philosophizing. Or, he adds, a place for making a philosophy of the social.

Dennis says: *I've had many lives working on this. And after I die, I'll come back again. And I'll be doing the same thing as now.*

A rhythm monk, beat anchorite. Abyssinian hermits on inaccessible desert rocks listening to emptiness or God. Wise ones smiling and tranquil in village marketplaces as if they're listening to all the people's voices running together and they're hearing the sonic chaos as lovely orderly music.

Street and alley bricolage, storage caches, knapsack archive. The metal disc that anoints the beats comes from a junked pressure cooker. The thing rings like it's supper. Chimes, like everything's ready, time for the blessing.

KRISTEN MARCINEK


Can you find your own
STREET EATS?
1. a fruit
2. a veggie
3. a grain
4. meat
5. dairy
6. a dessert
7. a drink
email a picture of each to
lichenlabsgames@gmail.com
and get a special prize!
made with <3 by
LICHEN
LABS
@lichenlabsgames
www.lichenlabs.xyz

WYNN TUCKER

Thelonious Monk, Live at McDonalds

Maybe it's dead quiet (too quiet). Maybe there are the mouth-full murmurs of sleepy drunks, or the shouts of hyped-up interlopers making a pit stop. What you probably don't hear, and what I certainly did not expect to hear at the McDonalds on 18th and Columbia while I coaxed an order of medium fries from a human-sized touch screen, was the soaring saxophone of Charlie Rouse, gliding over the chord changes of Thelonious Monk's "Evidence" recorded live in Tokyo in 1963. I wanted to stay to hear Monk as he smashed out the first notes of his solo, but right then a young woman in a pink shirt and blue jeans threw up on the wrong side of the bathroom door, and the place emptied.

I have now returned on enough days, at enough times, to confirm that the McDonalds in Adams Morgan plays really good jazz. Specifically, the McDonalds is not playing your typical muzak that might softly frame the dining experience. No – this McDonalds serves up swing, bebop, and hardbop, at such respectably high volumes that no matter how delectable your Big Mac, it will be overtaken as a main course by John Coltrane or Bud Powell or Milt Jackson. A few others have noticed too. A Google reviewer gave it a 4 star review and said it's "More of a jazz bar than a McDonald" [sic]. Another noted that it "plays cool jazz music" and still another mentioned the "clean and calm atmosphere with retro music", which I assume means jazz.

Yet the provenance of the jazz is a mystery to me. On my most recent visit, while Miles Davis's "All Blues" blared above us, I asked an employee if he knew anything about the music, but he smiled and shook his head. A follow-up phone call to McDonalds went unanswered. Apparently the vibe has not always been this way: a one star Yelp review in 2015 complained that they blasted children's music in the dining room and mused that it could be a deterrent to loitering. If that was true, then what they're playing now is an invitation to listen for a while.

THEODORA DANYLEVICH

occasional poem from errand to the pharmacy --

november 6, 2024

downtown

fresh smell of plywood
occluding daylight

pristine plywood storefronts

archways

even temporary doors with
little plexiglass windows;
hinges, latches, &even
doorstops

intact

intact storefronts and banks

and phone shops too

all the workers lacked
daylight today

eerily quiet

the anticipation of immediate
violence has conceded to a
less immediate and less
fixable violence

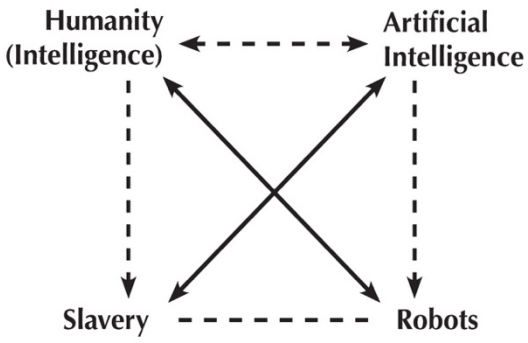


Diagram of Opposition:

Artificial Intelligence

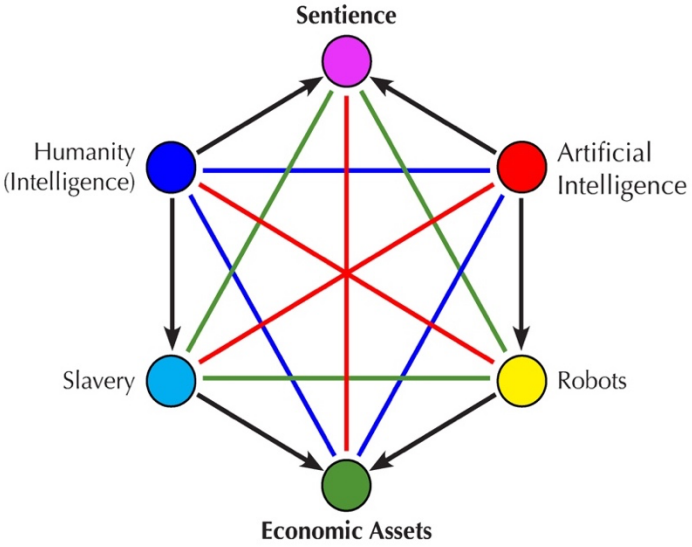
Designed by J.R. Osborn *in dialogue with philosopher* Carl Sachs

This diagram takes the form of the Traditional Square of Opposition, which semiotician A.J. Greimas called the "semiotic square." The displayed square unfolds from an initial opposition between "Humanity," as a marker of intelligence, and "Artificial Intelligence," as its contrary. The terms on the left side of the diagram are biological, and those on the right side are non-biological. The initial terms on the top of the square relate through discussions of intelligence or "Sentience." The terms on the bottom of the square, in contrast, are perceived as economic assets for exploitation. The diagram helps demonstrate how current discussions of AI, while seemingly centered upon questions of sentience and "intelligence," intersect with deeply rooted and unresolved economic issues. Economically and morally, the debates of Artificial Intelligence are haunted by the question of whether or not AI can produce human work without humanity perceiving AI as fully human. As philosopher Carl Sachs notes: "The fantasy of ethically permissible slavery has taken on a new guise: the guise of artificial intelligence."

Quote

"A.I. is now our current fantasy of a perfectly heteronomous cybernetic system: one that is perfectly obedient in response to what it is commanded to do. It is the perfect slave, the self-controlled system that lacks the very possibility of resistance or rebellion. Not being alive, it cannot fear death. Not fearing death, it cannot risk its own existence for the sake of something that is sometimes more important than life: freedom."

— Carl B. Sachs, 2023, *"Artificialis Intelligentia Delenda Est": A Critique of Cybernetics*



The set of relations depicted as a Hexagon of Opposition: This presentation emphasizes the underlying tension between Sentience and Economic Exploitation.

DAVID MITCHELL

Bear

for Sam

What is the bear

(he's in front of me)

What is it you asked me.
bang; you're dead,
and now, I think it's

Think? Keepsies! shoot, sucker

I think it's marbles. Swirlies,
pure pigmented
money-soaked honeyed folded canvases
*s*agging, obliterated, raked through with

Paint it red

Red?

red. until white

cut it up
throw it out.
go left to
to go right
Be gin at the be ginning
andgo onuntilyougetto theend
then never stop

What is the bear
everything. everything beautiful
everything running together in shadows
everything all at once
No time to see it

PARTH RAVAL

1. He's happy.
2. He's shouting.
3. He's alone.
4. He's the male lead in a full-color silent movie set on the Irish coast.
5. He got lost on a hike that looped around the Quirkiest Lighthouses of the Pacific Northwest (all defunct.)
6. He's waiting for a seagull to nail him in the uvula. He frequently says, "There's a non-zero chance a seagull will be responsible for a pivotal decision in my life."
7. Styx? Michael Bolton? Steve Perry?
8. He's getting a prostate exam and look, it's nothing to be scared of.
9. He's fun at parties.
10. He's someone's best friend and you keep forgetting his name.

I'm the horse today and fuck yeah FUCK YEAH it feels good God I could run like 20 miles and not get tired I'd be sleek as shit and shining and resplendent and everyone would be like, "Hey is that a palomino?" NO DUMBASS I'm too regal from vacant eye to thunderous hoof. Ben's the dinosaur. Sam's the monkey. He was like, "I'm actually a bonobo." Sylvia's the pigeon. Hell yeah she is. We're gonna do this kid's birthday party and we're out of here. Sylvia and I. Me and Sylvia.

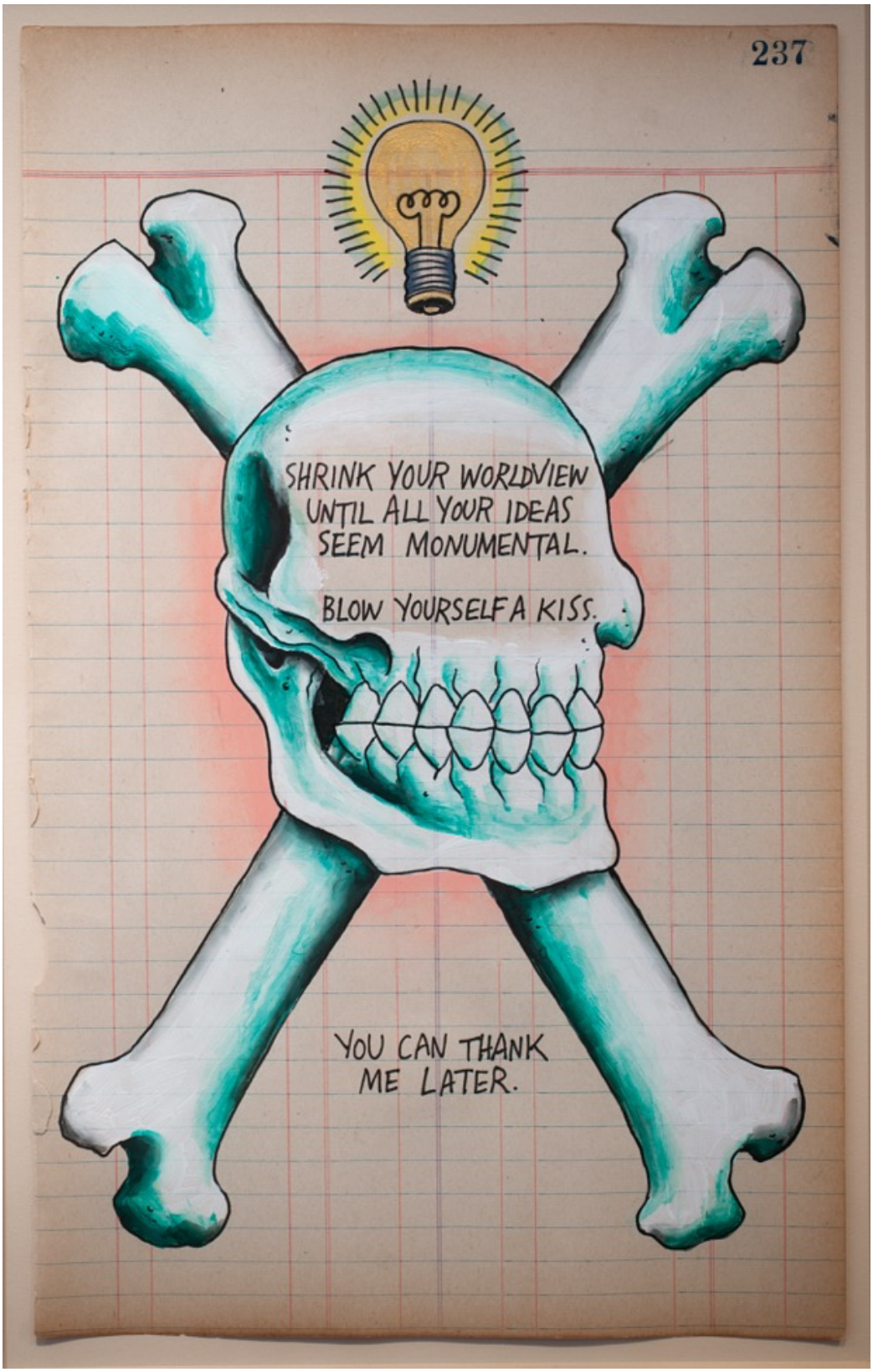
God, I have waited my whole life for you.

JENNIFER JANTZEN

in the noble tradition of the american west, i don my horse in Zelda for the switch

and i *love* that horse, i *covet* it,
until i find another
that's larger and whiter,
then i love *that* horse,
i *covet* it, my eyes the shine
of yellow crayon on deerhide,
i *love* that horse, i press A
to mount, the NPCs swap
stories of me felling hoglike beasts
in the guise of blonde twink,
and i *love* that scene,
the flickering fire, its sore
red scent like branding iron
on horsehide, that horse, it slows,
so I whip the flesh, teach the feel of *yes,*
and we ride, we run, our jaws unhinge
to swallow apples whole, and yes,
in the noble tradition
of the genocide, i *love* that horse,
i ribbon its hair, cupping hand
to flicking ear as the day now
cycles out: *here's what I plan*
to kill tomorrow.

ERIC OWEN DOYLE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SHRINK YOUR WORLDVIEW UNTIL ALL YOUR IDEAS SEEM MONUMENTAL.
BLOW YOURSELF A KISS.
YOU CAN THANK ME LATER.

VANCE HEDDEREL

A Capon that Sometimes Tries to Crow

"An endomorph who is not at home in the water is a rarity."
— William H. Sheldon, Ph.D., M.D., *Varieties of Delinquent Youth*, 1949

I am a fairly good swimmer.		I am terrified of the gymnasium.
I was bullied in school.		I ran away from home.
I am called a vagrant.		I am called a criminal.
I am the son of an old American.		I am the son of a Canadienne.
I am good at mathematics.		I am inadequate in others.
One test said my IQ is 104.		My IQ is 78 one test said.
I have stubby features.		I have a crooked, twisted mouth.
I look like I am well coordinated.		I have poor coordination.
I am disturbed by noises.		I never laugh.
I have heavily boned arms.		My arms are flaccid, weak.
I am not feebleminded.		I have no special abilities.
They said it was my glands.		My gland therapy made no difference.
My face is a mask.		A tear will sometimes roll down and drop from the end of my nose.
Treatment is a larger problem than I am.		Treatment of the general problem of the social control of reproduction is necessary.
I do not fit conventional diagnostic pigeonholes.		Primary g+1, secondary $g\pm$. Primary t_3, secondary t_3.

CHRISTOPHER LUIS-JORGE

Scholarship

He was a student of the arts until his dear friend died in a car crash. From then on he studied death.

He meditated in graveyards, read physicians' journals, he interviewed the dead. Of course, he wrote many important books on the topic.

One summer's evening, while eating a bowl of raspberries, his heart collapsed upon itself and he died. At last, he understood.

Cowford, Florida

The circus came to town but the town did not go to the circus. What was there anyway but monkeys and acrobats? One way or another, they had those at home. Take the highway out in any direction and the roads are dotted with sideshows. Museums. Haunted hotels and gator farms. A mansion built by a robber baron but left to rot in the salty air or a Spanish fort that was conquered by the English then the Spanish then the English then the Floridians. The people work in factories or the Navy and neither of them want to pay to outsource the elephants in the room.

And sometimes the town remembers the beach. It is easy to love in the warm, when we are all as close to naked as the law will allow. That's all it takes to build life anew: time; to forget the pain that lives everywhere but the beach; to couple and play and roast into sunburns that stay on your skin for eighteen years. But I hear they'd do it again.

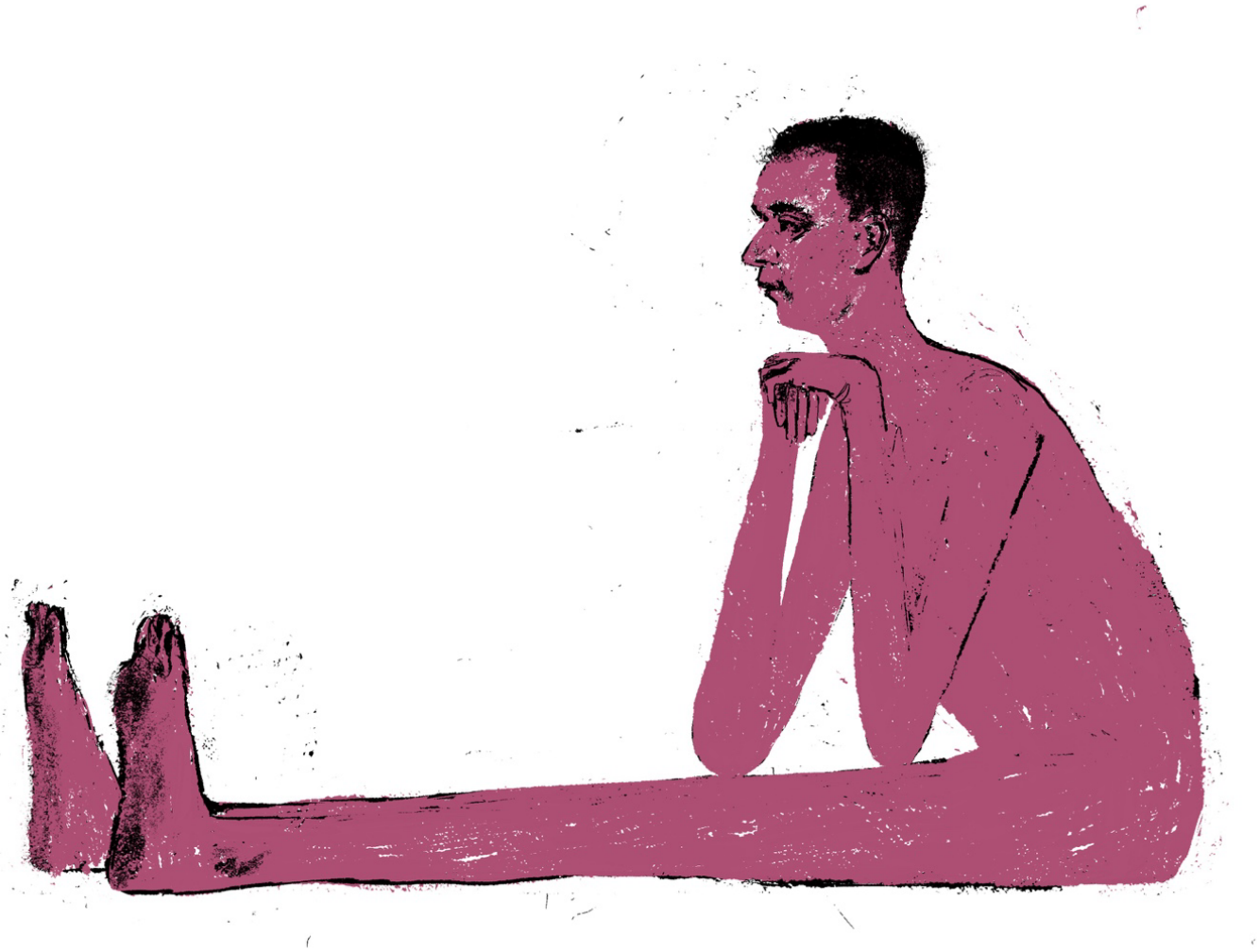
Of course, there's the melanoma. And the river that bisects the town is full of feces and Heineken bottles teenagers steal from their neighbors' garages. But also beautiful things. Like the joints they shared on the pier, watching the purple sunset. And the paint cans we used to spray our initials under the bridge. Even the dead bask under oaks so great and mossy, you'd think it was Savannah. So what does the circus have to offer? A fishbowl before the ocean.

Elegy for a Hungry Roomba

On the occasion that Bonkers' left wheel stopped turning

Did the dust in your eyes ever stop you from feasting
or the hair that wrapped about your wheels ever slow
you from rooting through the carpet's teat in search
for infinite food? No, friend, not shag carpet
nor skateboard could ever bring you self doubt
as you marched onward towards your meal, apex
predator of the condominium. A word is enough
for the wise and I'd be a fool if all I ever
watched were the tracks you left on the ground.

WILL S-W



JOE GASSERT

Citizen Kid

hope for Citizen Kid
hope for Francophone Freddy
hope for Glitter Bomb Girls
their subsidies swirl and eddy
the subsidies whirl it's heady
says the Broker to his Caddy as
Delilah saith to Betty
hope to finish up giddy up
most of what I started
most of what I started coast to coast
hope for Señor Sid and Citizen Ghost

To make a name for themselves

Untitled

Your paintings a perfume
Impersonal on the periphery

I became for a week a Wendigo
A captain of a no longer extant industry

Lately on the porch we serve lemonade
After a day spent outside in the hot sun

Not alone though grown apart
With so much still left undone

I blame two millennia of monotheism

Untitled

Ere I saw Elba I ran the Roomba

Words are fun to play with them
to mark my gradual decay with them
When it gets too complicated then
I'll break it on down to rhythms
keeping little else
Let me sweep up nice and neat
let me be discreet
while I shelve this weft and waft

and let this be my epitaph

OLIVIA BRALEY

Town Hall Liquor & Bar

We go out on Tuesdays because the drink specials,
poor off our parents, low allowance, but we will never be
poor poor not like the impossibly old guy at the end of
the bar, possibly having just turned 40, an unimaginable corner
in our just 21 year old maze of a mind in which we have not
hit any dead ends yet or not enough to realize that this will be
a pattern, we think How sad, out drinking alone at a bar
on a Tuesday, looking into his bud light for answers, we have
all the answers shoved into our pushup bras and lecture halls
with middle aged professors who look us in the eye, we say
ahem our answers are down here, we knock balls into pockets
crack crack they go and another drink and another, we vomit it up
later and feel good about losing the calories, we will go to class
tomorrow with vomit braided in our hair and say all the right things
and get asked for our numbers, Tuesday is karaoke night
and we are here hoping the boy whose eye we can hail with
one smile one hand on a bicep might see us and see that
we know everything, except when we see the boy he is showing
some stupid bitch how to make the pool balls crack into the corners,
he is lining up ball and cue, his hands over hers, she is sticking
her ass out, the last tequila shot is getting to us, we break
for the bathroom, there is a line of us tear-welled from nausea
and heartbreak, the poor old man is singing *turn around bright eyes,*
but we can't turn around because the boy is somewhere, the line
isn't moving, the lyrics are welling up in our throats, these are
supposed to be the best days of our lives, we think, what happened,
stupid us, knowing everything is where we went wrong

DANIEL TSOY

Finding the One

She writes about yoga, dogs, jittering insects and trampolines. She also writes about love via conquest, about old cathedrals and the way sunlight looks through their stained glass. She takes classes and learns how to make stained glass, just like the cathedrals. She has been fashioning a pipe in Salisbury's glass blowing studio during the days, but around four she likes to meet her friends to throw frisbee on the green. They're all amateurs except the one stud who loves to teach proper forehand technique to the girls. She finds herself writing at night about the stud, who is actually a really good guy, a great guy in fact. She tries writing about nothing, yet every so often she writes about something. It is all worth keeping. One day she runs out of ideas, but rather than persevering through the writer's block, she gives up. She does not miss it; now she has more time for frisbee and sunlight—actual sunlight, not just the word. The stud takes her on a date, but they don't call it that; they call it hanging out. So they hang out a bit by the ocean. He tells her about his plans to go to either business school or law school, one of the two. He dresses well and knows how to truly give himself to someone without sacrificing himself. He doesn't always pick the right gifts for special occasions, but who does? He remains faithful, does not argue senselessly, and offers deep companionship, blinding in its true beauty.

The Neighborhood Kid

He walked around without any socks, but he owned about a dozen pairs. He was letting his feet "air out," and he said this as if they desperately needed the air, or better yet, some wind—muscular, terrifying gusts, but no one likes to think of wind that way anymore; he certainly didn't. He let his feet find the floor. He did not like how the hot sidewalk felt when he walked on it, but inside his head he thought to himself, *Maybe it will make my feet tough, like a Hobbit's feet…after all, they're already pretty hairy*. The relentless sun was incredibly far away, and the air fragrant with honeysuckle…but where was it coming from? Why were there so many sticks on the road, and who was the girl dancing on the lawn? She, too, was barefoot. When he passed, they exchanged hellos. *Maybe she is practicing for a grand routine*, he thought to himself inside his head, *and maybe she'll even make some money*. He imagined a modest crowd transfixed for the better part of an hour as she executed each step more or less perfectly. The critics wouldn't know what to say, but they would try nobly to understand why everyone in the auditorium felt the way they did when she stopped.

Oblong Necklace

Branches in my body,
vistas & landscapes.
It had to have been
a coincidence.

The friendly wraith.
The damaged conscience.
A pack of Seven Stars
and the left foot left

to die, predictably
before the height
of Summer. A pair
of confident mirrors

burning the sky
to a penny, and
faster than we could have
made it here by foot.

I am a meek Sun,
a toast, a wet sweater,
an acolyte of the primary
colors. Later

when the gallant
petal falls predictably,
I remind myself
I wanted this.

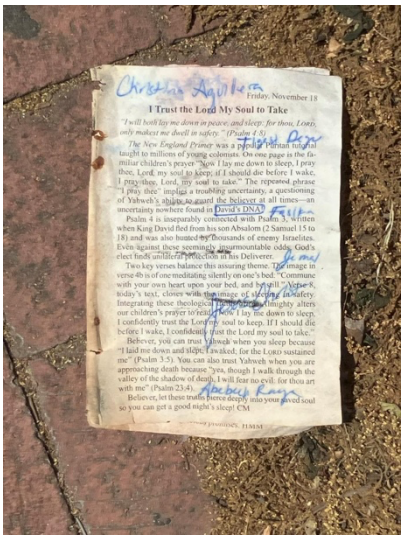
Guided

chromecast dragonwafer
weeping new teacher
blue entourage beside "this must be love"
uninterested wagon poem electively spans the width
beg the past for more information
aim at the crestfallen, searing masochists on the stove
the greedborne wellness or tokenable trust
a staywill honorbond infecting rupture prowess
giving esteemed flakes of pissant things
I eat only crust

JUDE LAVELLE

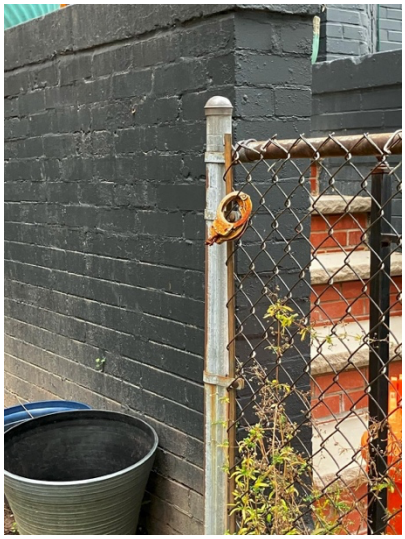
Heady Stuff

trash and graffiti across DC (2024-2025)



devout

dour

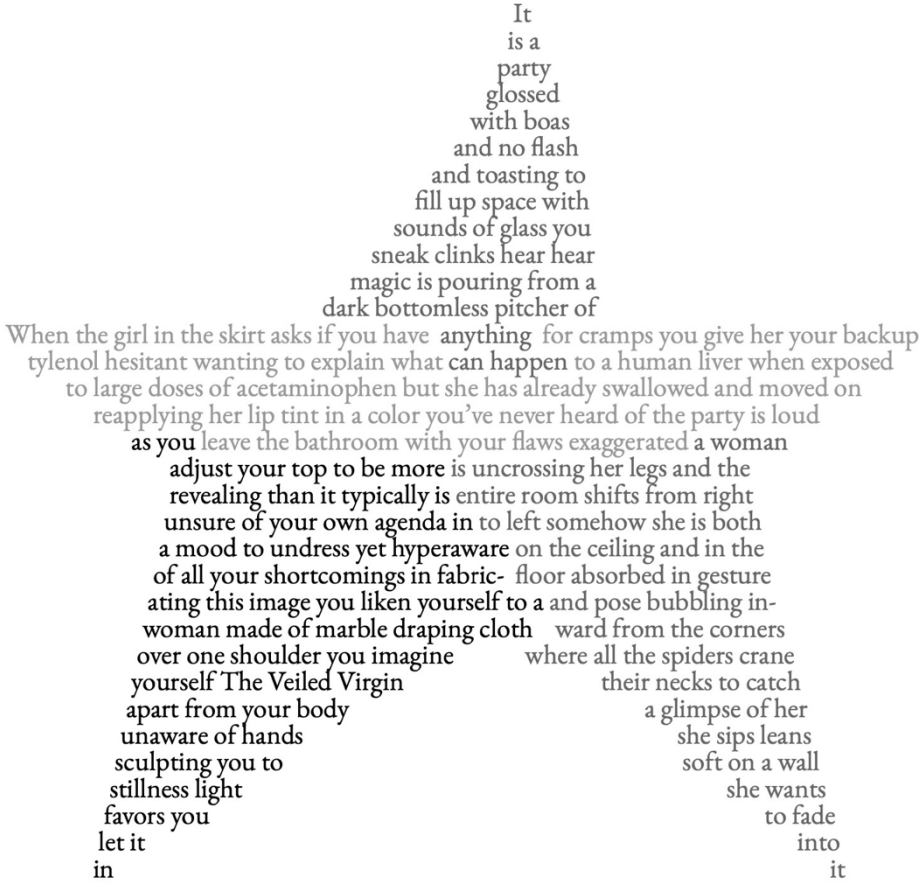


hooked

present

ISABELLA RHOTEN

Stargirl


It
is a
party
glossed
with boas
and no flash
and toasting to
fill up space with
sounds of glass you
sneak clinks hear hear
magic is pouring from a
dark bottomless pitcher of
When the girl in the skirt asks if you have anything for cramps you give her your backup
tylenol hesitant wanting to explain what can happen to a human liver when exposed
to large doses of acetaminophen but she has already swallowed and moved on
reapplying her lip tint in a color you've never heard of the party is loud
as you leave the bathroom with your flaws exaggerated a woman
adjust your top to be more is uncrossing her legs and the
revealing than it typically is entire room shifts from right
unsure of your own agenda in to left somehow she is both
a mood to undress yet hyperaware on the ceiling and in the
of all your shortcomings in fabric- floor absorbed in gesture
ating this image you liken yourself to a and pose bubbling in-
woman made of marble draping cloth ward from the corners
over one shoulder you imagine where all the spiders crane
yourself The Veiled Virgin their necks to catch
apart from your body a glimpse of her
unaware of hands she sips leans
sculpting you to soft on a wall
stillness light she wants
favors you to fade
let it into
in it

NADIA SOHN FINK

Tired Wrongs

Lost, gone with fear as a titanic year
Wildly yarning kiddie toes
To find lost yesses
Questions gone round like rice
Long, long
Grays and reds hidden
Plucked a kinetic frog
Then stopping certainly so frequently
Pole beaned wiggly
You now never see them
Tiny almost invisible mammals
Kind of lost track

CHRIS MASON

Special Differences

"We have
achieved plurality."
announcement over
school loudspeaker.
Climbing over
dried-up moat
outside big
city mega-school,
boy with
enlarged sticking-out
ears transfers
into my
special differences
classroom. Under
the plurality,
the plutocracy
is uncool
and large-eared
waggedy-fingered
children flourish
variously, their
projects featured
on bulletin
boards. When
plurality loses
steam and
plutocracy is
cool again,
large-eared
and waggedy-
fingered kids
make less
projects, don't
go to
birthday party,
and don't
get called
on, scribbling
tiny, odd,
un-exhibited
drawings in
classrooms of
big city
mega-school
circled by
dried-up moat
where no
frogs sing.

Back Yard

In dream
I try
slow time
down but
the clocks
keep speeding
it up.
Tai Chi
teacher freezes
us in
one position
until light-
headed and
wobbly. Warehouse
boss makes
us work
faster because
robots charge
too much.
Tai Chi,
back yard,
with chickens,
to scare
away hawks,
swinging arms
counting to
one hundred
under infinity
of blue
sky. Warehouse
owner tries
orbiting Earth
so fast
time gets
fat and
he stays
young. Recycling
truck wakes
me every
Friday, banging
bottles and
cans. Chickens
explain: "Time
doesn't tick,
it squawks"

PAUL KILLEBREW

Steamy Parking Lot

The morning sunlight flatters the hills

as they lose their transcendental ethos
amid the dailyness of desire.

A character of my personal folklore
like a fractal reproduces itself in smaller and
smaller predicaments.

I'm developing a virus that will harden the walls of human cells
with a calcium-iron alloy that I apply to my face with a floppy silk brush
while intoning long vowels into a skull I stole from the Museum of Natural History.

I found myself internally cataloging
the chemical burnoff smell of a fake fireplace
in dimensionless sobriety.

The future tension
scolds into the air
one angry bead at a time.

You'll dash down its highways with a wind in your hair
and a set of ideas you've been testing on your children
as logistics and bland juice.

At some point I stopped wanting anything,
it was too painful to be always denied and disappointed,
I just pushed my chair back from the table and said fuck it.

What a pathetic little bow I make
to the man yelling at me through his car window
about the cadences of aggression.

The family-state's place in scrambling
intuitive affinities of plain struggle
is so clear in high school.

Little Comment

Stuck in a tree
of ridiculous ideas
the flashlight twinkles
through the variables
the test takes itself
and I am asking you
to disappoint
like a piano
to an exasperated child
run at your very top speed
and become a blur
of sound
close to a word
but the finest distinction
a silhouette vs. a shadow
the picture loose in its frame
a robin glitching in the grass
traditional families
painted on flat screens
cluttering the background
no one touches
with fencing so high
fingers poking through it
a cough in the shadows
a large figure appears
"Who may I say is calling?"
a reluctance to speak
without a sense of structure
this anecdote goes here
a little joke in the foyer
tearful confessions
in generous natural light
painted over my face
I'll tell you everything
a really truly wonderful
line break thing to say.

CHARLIE WELCH

Good To Go

Wheat Ridge, CO

I haven't been back here since 1977. This is where I first made a cape out of an old blanket and climbed up the drain pipe of my elementary school and would stand guard on the roof. This is where I rescued turtles and stray cats and injured birds and kept them in the garage until I felt they were good to go. This is where I was dressed up in my mother's wig and clothes and jewelry and put on a show dancing to The Locomotion. This is where my brother and I tried to run away by climbing out our second floor bedroom window. We made it only as far as across the street where my sister was babysitting. This is where I came home from school and watched my pet gerbil eat its babies and thought I didn't have it so bad. This is where I got a plastic knitting machine as a gift that knit only tubes and I would make my own socks my favorite were a pair made from thin yellow and purple yarn which I wore to school all of the time. When I pulled them up they looked like fishnets. I was so proud. This is where I first heard Olivia Newton-John and my life changed forever. Everything seemed so much bigger then.

M. WOODS

What is the Numb Spiral

The social evil and its enmity towards the Other are gassed up like the economy - regulating comforts and commodities through the application of racial hierarchies. The photographic print struck from this radical Desire (ex nihilo) becomes Nihilist reality. Multiplied and broadcasted by deeply Solipsistic presidential cons… they all operate the same.

Bourgeois hyper-mundaneness decides when the system is too unstable. The comfort of the bourgeoisie sublimates hyper-violence, but only until real violence is everywhere.

This is the architecture of all negation. It will inevitably yield the end of humanity, and human nothingness will be realized. This radical nothingness supports the supremacy of dominant cultures.

There is a lost codex. Wes, the doppelgänger, wrote down some of the Mysteries. The singularity will be reached when the Digital Sickness circulates enough empty content to *emanate* the three Amens simultaneously. Amen 1: 0 Dark / Amen 2: 1 On / Amen 3: Switch

STELLA MARIE

Anti Anti Anti day 4/5/24 – 4/9/25 A poem

- A little jape for the knave girl with the sailor hat and rosepetal style
- A perfect Saturn's Day to hither to the strawberry bush under the lofty bricks of the cathedral
- We love under the sun as the pink beribboned flowers in Thyn hair dances with the cool breeze

- The aging eyes of woden cries a crystal tear of joy
- A fortune of emerald tea poured between the lehter of Barley-break and Leaping in the waving straws
- When the world stands still I can only your thy voice ringing in my ear

- A steam engine running rides the hem of your skirt like a caterpillar
- daytime stars tied up in your smile, oh how melancholic they wain
- Two angels, tired of flying, strumming the golden strings of an Aeolian harp

FOUND in a Little Free Library on New York Avenue in a 1969 edition of Nabokov's 'Ada, or Ardor'

NEW STIMULI

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE | AUTUMN 2005 | ISSUE 37 | $7.95

SQUIRTING AWAY THE SQUEAKS

Management Guru Maurice Hopgood on fame, Davos, and the art of lubrication

By Letta Baretta | Photography by Damien Laurent

Phenomenology in practice

I met Maurice Hopgood the summer after we both graduated from college, he from Dartmouth, I from Iowa State. At a fondue party celebrating a mutual friend's chapbook, we bonded over a shared love of Hannah Arendt and a distaste for mauve. With the exception of a few scattered e-mails—mostly from him, mostly about UFOs—we went our separate ways, but he turned up (uninvited) at the premier of my Off-Broadway play about high-stakes water polo gambling, and I was gratified to see my name in the acknowledgments section of his runaway business bestseller, WD-40 for the Boardroom. This conversation took place on a winter morning in a tiki bar in Newark, NJ.

Were you surprised by the glowing reviews of your book? The overnight fame, if not to say ubiquity?

You have to understand, the first few WD-40 books were strictly desktop publishing and, I must admit, kind of embarrassing. I made *WD-40 for the Basketball Court* for my high school coach, and he made copies for the whole team. I made *WD-40 for the Dorm* as a gag, but the dean insisted on distributing it across campus. It just kind of snowballed.

Dribble Pillow Talk

Clean up on Aisle G-7

Now you're attending Davos and hobnobbing with CEOs from around the world.

Hobnobbing? Did you say hobnobbing?

I used that term. Do you find it problematic in some way?

Beyond its intensely trivializing rhetorical force, I suppose not. I guess I should not expect things to be much different if I am to be *hobnobbing* with the press. That's on me, as people seem to enjoy saying.

Did you find the atmosphere stimulating? Is it truly an invigorating exchange of ideas?

Is what?

Lyotard (?)

The conversations at Davos. I've never been.

It's all right, I suppose. I mean.... a lot of conventional thinking. The wisdom of the crowd is somewhat hemmed in by the crowd's tendency to look around and try to discern what the crowd thinks, and then say that... circularity, if you follow me.

Publicity around the conference always makes it sound — well, rather different.

If Emerson were alive today, I would expect him to say something to the effect of, It is foolish to consistently hobnob with little minds.

If he were alive, and competed on Dancing with the Stars.

Yes. Evidently, Emerson had two left feet.

"Evidently, you still cling to a perverse definition of the word fame, but when I use the term, I straddle multiple valences."
—Maurice Hopgood

You and Davos, it just seems like a rather unlikely prospect. Ridiculous, even.

But why, pray?

Well, as a noted proponent of self-reliance, I mean... isn't the whole point of a conference like that to strengthen a global system of interconnection and collaboration? Ultimately benefiting those who have seats at the table, of course. But, still — you know, mutual interdependence, surely...

If only Emerson had got around to writing that essay on hard power and soft power. Then we would have something.

You're a famous author at this point. How do you find that fame changes the work?

Evidently, you still cling to a perverse definition of the word fame, but when I use the term, I straddle multiple valences: reputation, standing within one's profession, the power in the nominal function, to use a term, when a piece of writing is headed by one's name -- there is a seamlessly fluid transition there from standing within one's profession to the maintenance of a brand.: reputation, standing within one's profession, the power in the nominal function, to use a term, when a piece of writing is headed by one's name — there is a seamlessly fluid transition there from standing within one's profession to the maintenance of a brand. But then, *fame* also encompasses *celebrity*, and that is another matter. Another matter entirely. By the way, is it okay if I turn the tables and ask you a question, Letta?

Fire away.

I don't know how to say this, except the most straightforward. What *happened* to you?

Meaning...?

I would have thought you'd have a cabinet full of Tonys by now. You should be the toast of Broadway, but your destiny got derailed, apparently. What happened?

It's not an unusual story, Mo. Dipsomania, paranoia, nymphomania, insomnia. The whole kit and kaboodle.

(continued on p. 34)

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I see. Congratulations are in order.

What's that supposed to mean?

You're still here, Letta. You survived the kit and the kaboodle. You're standing on your own two feet and interviewing a famous writer.

"To tear things down is a task of the terrorist; the insurrectionist; the resistance fighter. It is by definition undertaken by someone who is weak, against a stronger opponent."

Yes, well, anyway.... *You* have always been, I would say — savvy; canny? — about the mischievous deployment of technical vocabulary. You have been successful in asking the word *lubricate* for example to bear a very substantial conceptual load throughout *WD-40*'s arc of development. Sasha Molensky, in a prominent essay (for *The Atlantic*?) — dubbed "perceptive" by I want to say Frank Rich no less in the *New York Times* —

Preceptive is the word Frank used, unless that was an editorial error or trick.

Thanks, what I was getting is that Molensky posited: "Much of the appeal of this work lies in the simple yet evergreen-effective trick of yoking together zeugmatically the unlike valences of the ethereally conceptual (and therefore ostensibly intellectual and even virtuous) alongside the vaguely dirty." It's a line of argument that has stayed with me. It is at a minimum memorable. But is it true?

Whether it qualifies as punching down or not in a given instance, lobbing cheap potshots is an example of what I call *weak aggression*. It's a concept I've been playing around with, and developing a few pieces around. To tear things down is a task of the terrorist; the insurrectionist; the resistance fighter. It is by definition undertaken by someone who is weak, against a stronger opponent. Or a more worthy one. That is why, seemingly paradoxically, it is a tactic of the elite — the lazy, debased yet entrenched figure who feels threatened by something but cannot summon the will to take it on in a more legitimate, more equal, and more vigorous manner. Weak aggression is a sort of cousin to passive aggression. And demonstrates character in an equivalent fashion. Molensky is an undoubted opportunist, who indiscriminately capitalizes on that which is available. The more durable disappointment is reserved for Mr. Rich, who is possessed of a fine intelligence, and from whom I should like to be able to expect better. To validate this sort of material is, I mean...

Not to lean too heavily on the words of David Byrne, but I hear you talking a lot — and yet, what are you saying? This sounds like something akin to a denial in which nothing is actually denied.

I'll answer your David Byrne with some Forrest Gump: Claptrap is as claptrap does. Is that clear enough for you?

The act of interviewing tends to make me think, in a sort of sly or ironic way, about the clichés of interviewing. Has anyone ever said to you, Tell me about your childhood?

No.

Would you care to tell me about your childhood?

No.

Is your current career trajectory... I don't know — is this the achievement in reality of a vision you at one time could only dream of? Or... a sort of continually unfolding accident, presumably a happy one, set in motion by a chance event? The high school publication you mentioned, let's say. The ongoing motion in a direction that follows on from an event setting you in motion — sorry, I'm phrasing this badly.

And you have set yourself into a circularity. That is your motion. [laughs] You are inviting me for a second time to describe to you my childhood. It is not like that. I have never been the dreaming boy consumed by romance who longs for... whatever it may be. Like Chairman Mao or Walt Disney. No, I cannot say that I was ever that boy. Neither am I an avatar of Jay Gatsby.

At the same time, once begun — you have continued. To say the least.

I have continued. Certainly, that is a fact. I have not wavered from my path.

Your... chosen path?

What we do we may be said to have chosen, I think.

You *do* believe in free will, then.

Not in so many words. I believe that we believe we have free will. We behave as if we have chosen a path and set one foot in front of the other.

When you're meeting one-on-one with a CEO or a mayor, what does that look like?

Why, what have you heard?

I mean, do you give secret advice not found in your books? Do you ask questions or just hold forth? Are there fresh flowers on the table? Are lackeys coming in and out of the room with aperitifs and Post-Its? What do you wear?

Put it this way. What do I do?

That's what I'm trying to figure out!

I *fix* things, Letta. So I wear the uniform. It's a deep-blue flame-resistant mechanic's jumpsuit, complete with a patch that says my name in cursive letters.

You "fix" things. WD-40 is instrumental, clearly. It gets things unstuck. Things that are perhaps fixed in place? Do you participate in a cycle of activity? Getting things set in place, and then removing obstacles to progress? "I fix things" is so simple; it sounds so self-explanatory. And yet... what are you telling me? What are you saying? What do you tell yourself?

Consultants participate in a constant cycle of activity in which they are always coming in in the middle, doing things, then handing them off... still in the middle, just a different one. Is your activity like that? How do *you* respond to the word *consultant*? Would you want it applied to you?

This is beginning to almost feel like we're two characters in a play.

One of *your* plays, maybe.

Letta Baretta is a playwright and cultural critic based in New York. Her collection of interviews, "Conversations with Myself and Others," will be published by Aperture Press in Spring 2006.

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The "Algebra" of Memory Transmissions

Corey Thuro

$$t_n \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{A(mem_a)}{\circlearrowright} \\ personA \xrightarrow{mem_a} personB \end{array} \right) t_{n+x}$$

Introduction

The biologist Michael Levin has suggested the possibility of transferring memories between organisms [1]. As of 2024, the evolution of this possibility into the form in which it is imagined here remains science fiction, but we will construct a "thought experiment" around it anyway. Scare quotes because while this work *will* combine the imaginative with logic, our aims are aesthetic or recreational rather than scientific or philosophical (this is not to say this work will lack philosophical value). A logic/sci-fi mash up.

Notes: In mathematics, the term 'algebra' has a precise meaning, requiring specific conditions to be met. Our system does not satisfy these conditions and so our use of 'algebra' is somewhat misleading or impressionistic. Satisfying these conditions would have meant grounding everything in a quantitative base: i.e. the real numbers. While we do index time by the reals in a hand-wavy way, we didn't want quantitative scaffolding to predominate this version of the exercise. This is why the quotes in the title. It is also the case that the symbolic notation is mostly gratuitous, "just for fun" (as is the entire exercise). We don't want to give the reader the wrong idea, and we don't want to be obscure about our intentions. Finally, the decision to format this in LaTeX was purely about giving things the flavor of an academic document. I personally can't stand the look of LaTeX papers.

Preliminaries

Assume that science has reached the point at which a form of Levin's prediction has come to fruition. Technology exists which allows for the transfer of memories between (human) organisms. Assume also that the problem of the receiver decoding the transplanted memories has been solved so that two subjects can transmit memories to each other on command and integrate them into their respective experiences more or less seamlessly. Our subjects have control over which memories to send, so that A can send B a memory from 10 minutes ago or 10 seconds ago or from any other time. Each subject also has control over the duration of the memory sent, so that B might send A a 5 second memory from 10 minutes ago. The machinery of the memory transfer system is light and unnoticeable so that one is able to be plugged into it and go about one's

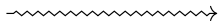
life as usual. We stipulate that any transplant memory m comprises (at least) the following phenomenological components:

- Visual imagery, such as that of a daydream
- Forgetfulness or disassociation regarding one's present existence for the duration of the memory (i.e., lack of self-awareness)
- Contextual beliefs (i.e., beliefs which would have been present during the experience being remembered)

Then transmitted memories have a level of dissociative intensity to them, as in the case of a daydream. When the experienced transmitted memory is over, there is a brief moment in which the subject must readjust to their self (as when waking from an intense dream and realizing it was just a dream).

States of the memory transfer system

The memory transfer system has two memory transfer states: discrete and continuous. If the machine is set to continuous then the receiving subject will receive an unceasing flow of the other subject's memories, otherwise transmitted memories will be singular. We denote the continuous state with the zig-zag arrow



and the discrete state with the dotted arrow

Elements

The algebra of memory transmissions is built up from a few primitive elements:

1. subjects
2. memories
3. transmissions
4. experiences

Our domain of discourse shall be defined as the vernacular understanding you the reader possess of words such as "subject", "memory", "transmission", "experience", or any other concepts (e.g. passing time) relevant to this exercise. As mentioned at the outset, if one wished, one could actually model the phenomena to come quantitatively, with, e.g. an algebra over a field. But that would be less interesting to me right now. [1]

[1] Sociological question: What does it mean that most mathematicians don't care about foundations of math? Should they be compelled to pay this exercise as much respect as they do mathematics?

The Precedence Relation

In establishing our foundation, we rely on notation and concepts from temporal logic such as precedence. The precedence relation will be denoted $\prec$ so that given propositions (R, X), the statement $R \prec X$ should be read as "The instant at which R precedes the instant at which X." The following are some normal properties of the precedence relation. For all propositions R,X,Y:

- Reflexivity: $R \prec R$
- Transitivity: $((R \prec X) \wedge (X \prec Y)) \Rightarrow (R \prec Y)$
- Anti-symmetry: $(R \prec X) \Rightarrow (X \not\prec R)$

We call these properties "normal" because they are the properties which (Western?) human common sense imputes to the passage of time.[2] Notice that taken together, the properties imply that no two distinct instants can occur simultaneously.

Memory transmission notation

If A and B denote our subjects, and t_i an instant in time[3], we will denote A's and B's memories of events which occurred at t_i by $A(m_i)$ and $B(m_i)$, respectively. Notice that $A(m_i) \neq B(m_i)$ even though both memories reference events which occurred at t_i. To denote that a memory was transmitted at a given time, we prefix the expression with t_n so that

$$t_n \left(\; A \xrightarrow{mem_i} B \; \right)$$

would be read as follows:

> At t_n, A discretely transmits the memory of an event at t_i to B.

If we include some t_n after the final parenthesis (see the image beneath the title) this means that the events inside the parentheses take place in the interval from the outer-left t_n to the outer-right t_n. These durations are durations as measured by the imagined subjects. We imagine that t_n corresponds to some specific clock time observable by the subjects. If we wish to speak generically of memory transmissions, we will use conventional function notation. For instance, we might speak of a transmission $f : A \to B$. We denote the experience of a subject A by

[2] Reflexivity of time-instants with respect to precedence is arguably not common-sensical.
[3] We will think of an instant in time as some real number

If we wanted to say that A experiences mem_n at t_q we would write:

$$t_q \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{mem_n}{\circlearrowright} \\ A \end{array} \right)$$

Finally, if we wish to denote the content of a memory (say, some proposition f) we write $f \subseteq A(mem_n)$ to mean "f is expressed by $A(mem_n)$."

Basic examples of notation

1. $A \overset{mem_i}{\cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots\rightarrow} B$

Reads: A transmits mem_i to B.

2. $\overset{A(mem_i)}{\circlearrowright}$ B

Reads: B experiences $A(mem_i)$.

3. $B(A(mem_i)) = B(mem_k)$

Reads: B's memory of $A(mem_i)$ is a distinct memory $B(mem_k)$.

4. $t_n \left(B \overset{mem_k}{\rightsquigarrow} A \right) t_{n+m}$

Reads: B continuously transmits mem_k to A from tn to t_{n+m}

Rules

1. Memory transmission is (virtually) instantaneous:

$$t_k \left(B \overset{mem_q}{\cdots\cdots\cdots\cdots\rightarrow} A \right) \Rightarrow t_{k+1} \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{mem_q}{\circlearrowright} \\ A \end{array} \right)$$

Where $\forall \epsilon > 0 \quad ||t_{k+1} - t_k|| < \epsilon$

2. Every memory is subject to transmission:

$$\forall A(mem)\ A(mem) \Rightarrow \Diamond \left(A \overset{mem}{\cdots\cdots\rightarrow} B \right)^{4}$$

3. Every experience becomes a memory:

$$\forall e(B) := \text{experience of B } \exists\, mem_n \text{ such that } (e(B) \prec mem_n) \wedge (e(B) \subseteq mem_n)^{5}$$

4. Every transmitted memory m is experienced by the receiver:

$$t_n \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{A(mem_a)}{\circlearrowright} \\ A \overset{mem_a}{\cdots\cdots\rightarrow} B \end{array} \right)$$

Some Consequences

1. The act of transmitting a memory becomes a memory for the transmitter. (from 2 and 3)
2. The experiencing of a received memory becomes a memory. (from 3)

Episodes in the algebra of memory transmissions

I. Identity disorientation of subjects

(1) $$t_{q+1hr} = t_r \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{B(mem_q)}{\circlearrowright} \\ B \overset{mem_q}{\cdots\cdots\rightarrow} A \end{array} \right) t_{r+n} \text{ for any chosen n.}$$

(2) $$t_{(r+n)+17min} = t_s \left(\begin{array}{c} \overset{A(mem_{(r)})}{\circlearrowright} \\ A \overset{mem_r}{\rightsquigarrow} B \end{array} \right) t_s + x \text{ for any chosen x.}$$

(3) Repeat this process until it becomes epistemologically impossible for A and B to meaningfully assert the reality of their distinct identities or the reality of the past/future memory/premonition relation of events.

In English:

(1) B discretely transmits the memory mem_q to A 1 hour after t_q. That is, 1 hour after the event of which mem_q is a memory. A experiences $B(mem_q)$.

[4] We use $\Diamond$ here to informally denote possibility.

[5] We use e(B) as notation here because LaTeX formatting of the "identity arrow" became unwieldy.

Recall that during the experience of the memory, A believes that they are B. Then, upon the memory ending, A experiences the brief shock of remembering they are A.

(2) 17 minutes after t_{r+n}, for any chosen n, A continuously transmits to B everything from the interval (t_r, t_s+x) for any chosen x, so that in "chronological" order, B experiences:

1. transmitting mem_q to A.
2. experiencing $B(mem_q)$.
3. the brief shock of remembering they are "actually" A.
4. the brief shock of remembering they are "actually" B (after having remembered they are A).

This is the most difficult part of the whole exercise so let's try to clarify things with an example.

Example: Let's give A and B names. We'll call A Taylor, and B Robin. Using the above as reference, let's say at t_q Robin opens a door. Then we have the following order of events:

- t_q: Robin opens the door.
- t_r: Robin discretely transmits to Taylor the memory of opening the door.
- t_s: Taylor continuously transmits to Robin the memory of everything from t_r to $t_s + x$.

The third bullet means that at t_s Robin's experiences are the following. In "chronological" order, starting at t_s Robin experiences:

1. discretely transmitting to Taylor the memory of opening the door at t_q.
2. opening the door.
3. the brief shock of remembering he is "actually" Taylor.
4. the brief shock of remembering s/he (assuming Taylor is a woman) is "actually" Robin (after having just remembered s/he is "actually" Taylor).[6]

(3) Repeat this process until it becomes epistemologically impossible for A and B to meaningfully assert the reality of their distinct identities or the reality of the past/future memory/premonition relation of events.

[6]The example brings up an important point. It is important that the algebra of memory transmissions not be a blind manipulation of signs. When thinking through some construction one must refer to the preliminaries above and take time to imagine the phenomenological and psychological content of the subjects' experiences.

Endnote: It became clear to me upon giving a talk on this paper that what is actually being transmitted are full experiences whose objective time-position is attributed to the objective past. Integrating aspects of memory, such as its degradation, or thinking about transmitting only the semantic content of memory, are interesting topics for further research.

References

1. Levin, M. (2023, November 17). Memory Moves Outside Of The Brain [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved January 16, 2024, from `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghJ2OL4o4FA`

2. Allen, J. F. (1983). Maintaining Knowledge about Temporal Intervals. Communications of the ACM, 26(11), 832-843.

3. Prior, A. N. (1957). Time and Modality. Oxford University Press.

I pay – in Satin Cash –
You did not state – your price –
A Petal, for a Paragraph
Is near as I can guess –